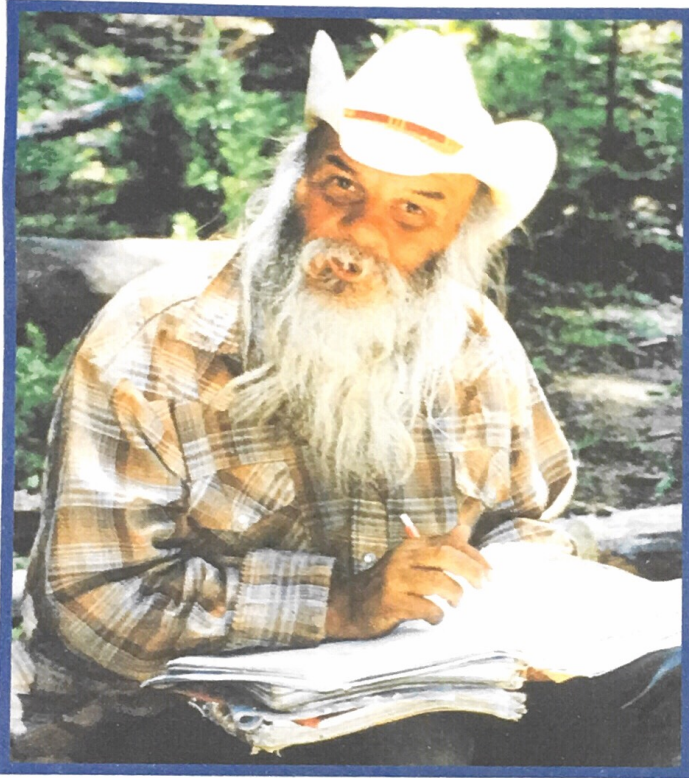




# Rainbow Family

## Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.*

*Scanned in 2018.*

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07.C FREE EAGLE - "Getting Used to  
Telling the Truth"

- interviewed at the 1978 Oregon  
Gathering "

6 pages

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## FREE EAGLE Getting Used to Telling the Truth

[Free Eagle was 17 years old when he told me his life story at the 1978 Gathering in Oregon.]

Eagles are the only kind of bird I ever dream about because they are free. A lot of signs that have eagles on them stand for freedom. I needed a new name like Free Eagle for various reasons. It gets dead having the same name all your life. Like if you've got a real common name like I did, it gets real confusing in a room full of a lot of people with the same name.

I was born January 11, 1961 in Marysville, California in the Central Valley near Chico. My mom is from Oklahoma and my dad is from Missouri. I was adopted by them people when I was 28 months old. My stepdad has worked on a ranch for 25 years. I've raised animals - beef cattle, horses. I've worked in fields with hay and I used to raise pigeons.

When I started kindergarten, it was a trip. I was raised with no brothers and no sisters - seven miles out of town on a ranch, so it was really a trip. I really didn't like people my own age, because I was used to being around older people, more sophisticated people. I thought the other kids were just fucking punks. I didn't like them. So I got expelled from first grade and I was getting kicked off the school bus for fighting from first, second, third grades on up.

I didn't like my mom because she punished me a lot. I got along with my dad real good. All the time, my mother got after me about fighting. My mom told me I was adopted when I was nine. It was like hitting me in the face. I flipped out and ran away. I got as far as town and got caught by the cops. They sent me home. After that I ran away from school because I got tired of it. Then when I was 12,



I stole my mom and dad's car - Thanks giving '73 - and I hit an empty irrigation ditch in it and wrecked it. The cops put me on six months' informal probation. Right after that was over, when I was 13, I got arrested for making prank phone calls. These guys - my friend and his friends - were making armed robberies. I would help them by calling the cops and reporting something like a murder on the other side of town from the robbery and the cops would be all over on that side while my friends was robbing the other side.

My friend was 14. One of his friends was 24 and one 25. The only reason they had me doing it was because I was the young one. I knew when I got busted, the cops wouldn't do much to me. I got caught by a line blocker on our telephone because I had been doing it like every day for two months. I did like three days in jail. They put me on six months' informal probation and sent me to a crisis home in Orland for like 28 days. After that I went home and stole my dad's boss's Cadillac. They took me in three more days and gave me six months' probation.

Just a little before that, I had started doing acid a lot. The people I was with were heroin users, my friend's older brothers, and they could turn me onto any drug I wanted. I got into reds. Weed was just normal - that was an everyday thing.

When I was 14, I was strung out on reds and doing acid every day - constantly hallucinating - and I pulled a butcher knife on a school bus driver in Orland and got her to drive the bus as far as Redding. I wasn't going to stop until I got to a friend in Oak Run who had been in the armed robberies. We was going to get \$9,000 ransom for the bus and buy heroin and reds and all that. It was all a drug deal. There was shipments coming in from Hawaii to Frisco and they was going to make a drug pickup with all that money.

I got pulled over in Redding. I did 18 months in Youth



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Authority at Preston and my friends are still doing 25 to life.

That was in April, 1975.

Before I went to Preston, I was at Perkins Institution, which is used for observation. Everybody was hitting chicks up in the mop room. One guy, the counsellor came up to get him with the chick and he hadn't even got his nut and he was so pissed off, he stabbed the counsellor and killed him.

I never tried heroin before I went in Youth Authority. I thought I was just chipping on heroin now and then, but when I got out of Youth Authority and couldn't get it, I went into convulsions. I was too young.

Everybody in Youth Authority that I hung around with was using heroin. They had Nazi Low Riders there, like a clique, and they was getting heroin. The guards would co-operate for like one person who had money coming in. He would pay the guards \$120 and they got the smack. That guard was strung out on smack.

I was a Nazi Low Rider. We was always messing with the blacks. There was the Nazi Low Riders and the Three K's, which was white. The Mexicans was just normal Low Riders. They went by towns like East Side, West Side and all that. They had the OK Corral, which was whites and Chicanos mixed. The black gangs was like Crips - they was from LA - and Pirous from Frisco. The Youth Authority goes by school, but it's not really a school. All you learn is how to crack safes and fuck people up. They teach mathematics and stuff, but you can't think of that because all you're thinking of is who's going to jump on you when you got out of class. There was so much gang shit. When people broke out, it was usually three at a time, all from one gang.

The guards instigated riots between the gangs. Cause like if you wanted a person killed, you paid the guard enough and he would instigate a fight to where he would have to shoot the person you wanted killed. The guards had shotguns full of rock salt, but if they got close enough, it could kill you. The youngest I heard got killed was 16.

After I got out of Preston, some guy burnt me out of 50 bucks



for bunk weed and I burnt down his house and got nine months in Preston Youth Authority for that again. I was still strung out. I got out of there and I never did go home. I was kicked out of my county because of the bus kidnap. I went to Sacramento. I been in all kinds of foster homes. I'd rather not talk too much about that. Foster parents don't want drugs in their house, so that's how I got sent back to jail. Some of the foster parents were real religious. Some were alcoholics.

My mom forced me to go to a Southern Baptist church. Sometimes I would go to church out of curiosity. Religion's all right if you just control it. It's not for everybody. I listen to it, but as soon as I get enough of it, I don't want it around me no more. I used to offer Jehovah's Witnesses liquor when they would come around to the door at my foster home in Sacramento. It would freak them out.

After I got out of Preston, that's when I first found out I was really strung out bad. So I got a job doing body painting to buy heroin. Plus I was into music. I was in a couple of bands.

I met my old lady at a group home. She had had a sort of nervous breakdown. She was righteous. I could tell her anything and it wouldn't go no further than her. She was 18.

Two weeks after I left my last foster home, I went on a two-week run of acid and heroin. I freaked out and started tearing the town up - broke a lot of windows, fucked up a lot of cars, punched a lot of people out. So I went back to Youth Authority at Perkins.

When I went on that heroin and acid run, my old lady had a nervous breakdown and stole a car. They put her in jail, but they wouldn't give me no information about where they put her, because me and her was too tight.

I did 30 days in Perkins and then went to The Drug program in Sacramento. It was like attack therapy. They was supposed to shave my head, but I wouldn't let them. I kicked heroin in that



drug program. The program is just a front, I quit because I wanted to, because it was costing too much money, plus physical shit. Sometimes I wouldn't eat for like four or five days. And in jail, heroin costs just 10 or 15 cartons of cigarettes for a whole week's run and on the outside it costs 50 fucking bucks a day. In jail, that's enough for a week.

It took me ten days to righteously get over heroin and not want it any more. I was supposed to be in the drug program for two weeks, but I went on a six hour pass and came back fucked up on acid. So my discipline was I was supposed to be on a blackout - no privileges but three meals a day for two weeks. So I ran.

I hitched a ride to Oregon, and the guy told me about the Rainbow Family and took me to the Rainbow Farm at Drain. Garrick jumped on my case a couple of times there for not working. He thought I was kicking back all the time because he never seen me work - just kicking back. And when he wasn't there, I was working.

Anyways, I come to the gathering to get my head together. I like the gathering. I'm free like the eagle. I've always wanted to be free, so I dropped using heroin.

I'm still kicking heroin. I still get my shakes, but I'm using mushrooms and pot and that kind of takes its place and makes it easier to quit. I just try to block heroin out of my mind the best I can.

I brought a rig to the gathering, but I threw it away because I don't need it no more. I don't want to spend all that money. If I'm in jail, I'll probably use again, but I don't want to go back. I want to make a career out of music. If I just hit the road until I'm 21, and learn how to live, learn how to do other things besides rob and cheat and fuck up, then I'll only have to do six months county time.

It doesn't take no money to live like the Rainbow Family. I haven't had one red cent since I hit the road. Therefore, it would be really simple for me to live a musician's life, because sometimes they



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make \$30 a week and sometimes like \$1,000 a week. Either way, I know I'll survive.

If I had my way, I'd have a castle in the sticks and a band, but what could I do with more money than I needed? Even a millionaire can't spend it all.

I'm trying to get into more spiritual type stuff at the gathering - not deep into it. Like yesterday I prayed before I went hunting mushrooms and I found some really good ones. I tripped out for six hours. Like I believe in God, but not in excess.

I'm just telling you the truth. I might as well be straight with you any more. Because there's no cops at the gathering. Why should I cover anything? No one's going to do anything to me for what I say. I love it this way. On the street I would lie all the time.

It's kind of weird telling the truth, but it's something I've got to get used to.

[Free Eagle moved to a small town to live with a cousin. Her 17-year-old son had just died in a job accident and she was glad to have him. When I visited him at her home in October, 1978 he seemed very happy and healthy - free from addiction. He had bought an electric guitar.]